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**Knight - Water Baptism and  
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REMARKS

*Book*  
ON

WATER BAPTISM

AND

REVELATION.

---

BY THE AUTHOR

OF

"Observations on the Institutions and Habits of English  
Society, &c."

---

LONDON:

Published for the Author by

DARTON AND CLARK, HOLBORN HILL;

DARTON AND HARVEY, GRACECHURCH STREET; AND EDMUND FRY,  
BISHOPSGATE STREET.

1837. \*





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# **WATER BAPTISM.**

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## WATER BAPTISM ;

ONCE A TYPE OR SHADOW BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT :  
LONG SINCE FULFILLED OR FINISHED BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

## REVELATION ;

A PRESENT AND ENDURING REALITY CONTINUED BY DIVINE  
APPOINTMENT TO THE END OF THE WORLD.



SEVERAL members of the Society of Friends having recently manifested unsettled views of the doctrines of Water Baptism, and of the Revelation of the will of our Heavenly Father, as applicable to the present state of the christian church, I felt constrained to look a little at the controversy, under an impression that it might appear my duty to offer a few remarks to such of my friends as would be willing to read them in the simplicity in which I desired they might be written.

I freely confess that I have found no cause to doubt the correctness of any one feature of the original principles of the society, among which these two stand as prominent as most,—That Water Baptism, receding, as baptism by the Holy Ghost, advanced, the former, at an early period of the christian church, ceased to be an ordinance ; and that the Revelation to man of the knowledge and the will of God, by the Holy Ghost, was, by obedience thereto, the only foundation on which the

apostles, or any other christians, ever could, or ever did, or ever will be able to build, or realize any progress in the work of vital religion. This scrutiny has caused me to feel great sorrow of heart for some who have latterly denied revelation, as applicable to the present state of the church of God and of Christ: some notice of which will be found under its proper head. I have also felt uneasiness on behalf of those who are looking towards uniting with Water Baptism, lest, turning aside from the present visitation of the Lord, (which as a fire and a hammer in their hearts has, for wise purposes, brought them into a state of considerable perplexity of spirit), they should not let patience have her perfect work, whereby they might find, in quietness and confidence, their strength renewed; but, instead thereof, should seek consolation in creaturely elements, and thus afford the cruel adversary of our souls an assistance in diverting them from the teachings of God's Holy Spirit.

I heartily desire for my brethren, my sisters, and myself, that we may all, not only come to experience, but dwell in the conviction, that every ordinance, to be of any avail, must be accompanied by the Divine presence. Nothing can do our spirits any good except the Lord be in it; and as it is quite clear that the Jews used Water Baptism (as they and every other people have used their various religious institutions), too much out of God, and, consequently, out of God's will; so, I believe, with the same mixed views, feelings, and desires, it has been taken up by the Gentiles, to whom, as a body, it never was appointed; as well as by the Jews, to whom, as a nation, it was appointed. Yet do I acknowledge, that although the apparent tendency to adopt this departed rite is painful to my feelings, I have infinitely more hopes for such, (if they deny not the

revelation of the will of God in the heart), than I have for those who exhibit that deadness of soul manifested by too many of our nominal members.

On looking at the uneasiness of some of our society who desire a change, I wish tenderly and affectionately to remind them, that it really is invaluable we should bear the turning of the hand of the Lord upon us, and not seek relief from water, or any other creature. This is the way, in the Lord's time (which is the only good time) clearly to experience in the heart the going forth of the command, "Arise! shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee:"\* then is the time to go forth; if we impatiently move before, or indolently stay behind, we thwart the gracious intentions of Providence towards ourselves, and neglect the one real saving Baptism by the Holy Ghost and by Fire. Thus, for want of allowing patience to have her perfect work, we seek the living among the dead; we run from God in our hearts, where He really is, to seek Him in outward forms, where He really is not; and if we thus proceed, what prospect can we have but to make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience? Oh, Friends, think of these things;—weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary of Him by whom our actions are weighed, and our souls are weighed. What can forms do for us? What can the world do for us? Oh for the simplicity of obedience, the simplicity of faith, the simplicity of fidelity, the simplicity of love, the simplicity of the christian!

Therefore, though it may be, and I believe is, far better to seek for divine life among departed, and therefore lifeless, forms, than not to seek it at all; far

\* Isaiah lx. 1.

better to plunge into each religious rite that has ever been instituted by our Heavenly Father, than neglect to seek His glory in the attainment of the grace to which that rite may once have specifically pointed; yet, whether we go through all these forms, or none of them, we shall find, if spiritual strength should ever be our portion, that we neither need forms, nor our fellow men to aid us in the Work of Grace; but we shall have learned what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."\* Also, "the anointing which ye have received of Him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."† This teaching would shew us, experimentally, the beauty of that passage, "Be still, and know that I am God."‡ In this state, neither blind zeal nor indifference, neither shadows nor professions, would stand in the way of our receiving the everlasting Substance, in which our souls would magnify the Lord; and to all His holy requirings we should respond, "Thy will be done."

Now, although I admit that the society has had a dreadful fall from the spirituality which once shone forth from it so excellently; though I admit the covetousness of many, which is idolatry; though I admit that many in our foremost ranks, by leaning on each other's judgment, instead of taking every matter to the judgment-seat of Christ in their own hearts, honour their brethren above God, as Eli honoured his sons above God, and which I admit is also idolatry; and though I admit that I have heard more uncharitableness of judging, from some who have a birthright in our society, than I clearly

\* Mat. ix. 13.    † 1 John ii. 27.    ‡ Psalm xli. 10.

recollect ever to have heard out of it, which may well give a tinge of sadness to the heart of every one, who, having observed these things, properly reflects on them, and much excuses, though, perhaps, does not justify some who have departed from us in outward fellowship; yet, as I think I clearly see that these defections among us arise, not from the want of Water Baptism, but from the want of submitting to the Baptism and the requirings of the Holy Ghost, I feel constrained to advise that we may seek a substantial remedy instead of an imaginary one; remembering, that in the early period of the society, when the zeal of our predecessors against Water Baptism was at its height, they gave the most frequent and striking proofs of life to God and deadness to the world.

Far be it from me to risk disturbing the true faith in any, or divert any from that which profits their souls; and for all who enter on Water Baptism, or any other form or type, most cordially do I wish they might find (if it be possible) sound consolation in it; and that, by obedience to these *supposed* duties, and to others of *no doubtful character*, they may be led more fully to appreciate, and more constantly and more simply to obey, the voice of one crying, as in the wilderness of their hearts, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."\* Far be it from me to divert any one of you, my dear friends, who are looking towards Water Baptism as a duty required of you, from a full scrutiny into this subject, if you have the slightest idea that the Lord has any service for you in it; or that it seems, even in the slightest degree, to remain a command to be still observed and obeyed. May this scrutiny be followed up so as to yield

\* Mat. iii. 3.

conviction one way or the other ; may simple and entire obedience follow that conviction whatever it may be ; and may all who seek the assistance of those types, even if they have ceased to be the will of the Lord, enter upon them in sincerity, with a desire to HIS glory ; and may they experience an answer of peace in the heart, similar to that which was rendered to David, when informed that it was not the will of God he should build him a temple ; yet the command to refrain was accompanied with this sweet consolatory assurance, " thou didst well that it was in thine heart : " \* so may this subject yield you spiritual peace, whether, in seeking further to know for yourselves the divine will, it should seem your duty to proceed, or your duty to forbear.

On looking a little further into this subject, the enquiry has naturally arisen, to whom will you apply to perform this ordinance ? I do not recollect, in my Bible reading, any service required to be performed on behalf of God, but there has been, with the divine requisition, a divinely appointed servant for that service. We have no record of any appointed to baptize, except of the Jewish nation ; nor do I recollect that we have any record of the rite being appointed for any but Jews, except the Ethiopian Eunuch, whom Philip baptized ; the baptizing of whom, was, probably, intended to remind very degraded sinners of the efficacy of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of Fire, which could burn up all the offensive contents of even their hearts ; although, for blackness, they might be compared to the skin of the Ethiopian.

Should Water Baptism really be a gospel ordinance, yet, a divinely appointed baptizer, would seem essential to its efficacy for the following reasons. Because, if we

\* 1 Kings viii. 18.

consult the Holy Scriptures, we shall see that scarcely any class of persons were so entirely offensive to God, as those who attempted to follow His ordinances in a different manner, or at a different place, or by different priests, than He had ordained : Because, Baptism by Water was a Jewish ordinance, commanded originally (like circumcision and the worship at the Temple at Jerusalem) to the Jews only : Because, we read that those Jews who did not go up to Jerusalem to worship, but planted groves, and erected altars on the hills in their respective localities, that they might worship more at their ease than by travelling to Jerusalem, were gradually so given up to a reprobate mind as to worship Moloch ; an apt emblem of such professors of christianity as love the world better than God : Because, we read that Uzza was struck dead for merely putting forth his hand to steady the ark lest it should fall.\* Now, what to the creaturely mind seems more entirely suitable than his conduct herein ? He had to drive the cart containing the Ark : that Ark which all Israel had mourned the absence of, and which they had recently recovered, and which, moreover, they were right in loving, as containing evidences of the God who had been with them all their lives long, and had given them manna in the wilderness, protection from their enemies, and, above all, spiritual strength and consolation. How suitable it appears that Uzza, seeing the precious ark tottering, should endeavour to steady it ; how innocent appears his mode of doing it ; yet awful the reflection that this, which would appear wickedly careless to neglect, (reasoning after the manner of men), brought upon him instantaneous death, and made him a terrible

\* 1 Chron. xiii. 10.

example to after ages : \* well might David be afraid of its coming near him. And what ground can you show from scripture, that baptizers of the present day are any more appointed to meddle with Baptism, than Uzza was appointed to meddle with the ark ? The case also of King Uzziah, † who was obstinately bent on offering incense, (which was only the province of the priest to perform), for which one foolish attempt he received the instantaneous infliction of the loathsome and incurable disease of leprosy, far worse than death, were there not an hereafter ; and thereby eventually closed, in ignominy and disgrace, an otherwise useful and honourable reign of fifty-two years. Why were these terrible effects stamped upon an interference with divine prerogative ? Will any dare to hope that things of this nature were an abomination to the God of wisdom and consistency a few thousand years ago, and that they may even, by possibility, be acceptable or indifferent to HIM now ? How ought the proper recollection of these examples to awaken awful feelings on our entry upon the performance of any religious rite, or encouraging another to perform it without a divine call.

In endeavouring to follow out what appears to you a divine command to christians at this time, I feel sympathy for you in the difficulty which I believe it to be your interest to experience, in seeking out some men to baptize you, whom you can fairly hope may possibly have been divinely authorized to that service ; for if you apply to any other than a divinely authorized person, how can any good come of it ? You are not fulfilling a divine command unless you perform it in the way commanded, and by the authorized servants commanded. The various

\* 1 Chron. viii. 12. † 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. 23.

members of a family may as well baptize each other, as employ one no more divinely authorized than themselves ; indeed, if the baptizer takes money for it, you, by employing any to attempt enacting by you the Baptism of John,\* as Simon Magus sought ability to act by the Baptism of the Saviour, are apparently, at least, identified with the same spirit, inasmuch as you attempt the same works by the same means, and produce the same fruits ; attempting to serve God in the will of man, instead of striving with all prayer and supplication, that He would condescend to rule and reign in your hearts without a rival, agreeably with the spiritual description which Christ gives of the connexion between His Father and the Church.

Now consider the obvious danger, may we not say the strong probability, that, relying in some degree on the elementary and typical Baptism, we may rest in these shadows, instead of pressing, with all our souls, and all our strength, after the one, real, saving, Baptism by the Holy Ghost and by Fire :† “ not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” ‡ in the conscience ; and submitting to, and co-operating with, every trial, and every lesson with which he is pleased to baptize us ; not that we should stop, as at the bottom of Jordan, in the midst of these elementary waters, but rather that each of us should seek of the Lord ability to bring up from thence stones of memorial, and go on in the Lord’s strength, until all our spiritual enemies are subdued, and we placed in possession of the promised land, in that state of mind in which we are enabled to “ hear the word of God and keep it,” § the only state

\* Acts viii. 18. 19. † Ephesians iv. 5. ‡ 1 Peter iii. 21. § Luke xi. 28.

in which it is possible for any of us to know that God is really our God; the only state in which it is possible for any of us to know that Christ Jesus is really our King, or our Saviour. In this blessed experience, each of our hearts would become an altar to God, on which, and in which, all that is offensive to His divine purity would be sacrificed, and we should be enabled, in that which goes beyond all elements, rejoicingly to set up our "Ebenezer, saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us;"\* not that one of our fellow-sinners hath helped us by pouring water upon us. But what authority can christians shew from John the Baptist, and the Lord of Life and Glory, for continuing this Jewish ordinance? Do they not both clearly shew, first, that it was about to be fulfilled, and very soon after that it was finished? John, in speaking of his own Baptism and that of Christ, says, "He must increase, but I decrease;"† and Matthew gives the following account of John's mission and exhortation: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall Baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable Fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and,

\* 1 Samuel vii. 12.

† John iii. 30.

lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him : and lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”\* By which it appears, that on the occasion of Jesus being baptized with water, that ordinance ceased, or was fulfilled ; for He gave John this reason for baptizing even Him, “ Suffer it to be so *now* : for thus it becometh us to *fulfil* all righteousness ;” and immediately on this fulfilment of water baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost commenced by His descending from Heaven and lighting upon Jesus : and it was by this Spirit of God that Jesus wrought ; for He says, “ But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you :” † and the disciples who wrought in that same Spirit, not only cast out devils, but they also, by the same Spirit, were to be the judges of the poor deluded creatures who blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, by imputing His operations to Beelzebub the prince of the devils ; ‡ yet it is written, “ All men counted John that he was a prophet indeed ;” § but of what benefit was water baptism by John to those who obeyed not the advice or Divine message of John, to prepare the way of the Lord in their hearts, and make His paths straight? || that all might be straightforward and sincere ; that there might be no crooked policy to disgust the God of Truth and Righteousness ; that there might remain nothing to hinder the Lord walking in their hearts, ¶ and baptizing them into that heavenly communion which cannot be appreciated or understood by “ the carnal mind, which is enmity against God ;” \*\* but

\* Mat. iii. 11, 17. † Mat. xii. 28. ‡ Mat. xii. 27. § Mark xi. 32.  
|| Mat. iii. 3. ¶ 2 Cor. vi. 16. \*\* Rom. viii. 7.

that they might be engrafted into the pure Vine which bears good fruit;\* that they might become fit to be presented faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, There to abide for ever, witnessing His glory and doing His will.†

Now, although the Jews were ready enough to avail themselves of the outward form of water baptism, by which they hoped to secure at least a greater probability of salvation, by a means which still left them in the enjoyment of their sins; thus relying, as they evidently did, on the outward ordinance, the type, the shadow, they so far forgot the substance to which that shadow pointed, that they crucified the Lord of Life and Glory;‡ and such, in every age, have been those who say, but do not.

On endeavouring to discover whether Scripture shews any ground to believe that the Holy Ghost sanctions the continuance of water baptism to christians of the present day, or that any may perform it with safety to their own souls, the instance of Paul stands rather prominently, who, like the other apostles, shewed a tendency to cling to the Jewish rituals, for which tendencies the disciples were occasionally rebuked by the immaculate Redeemer; and for which the apostles had, on one or two occasions, to rebuke each other, after Jesus had ascended to the everlasting Father,§ (who, if we duly honour Him, will condescend to be our Father), to His God (who, if we obey Him, will condescend to be our God).

Now Paul, who was so active a persecutor before conversion, and so active a preacher and writer afterwards, enumerates two individuals and one household

\* John xv. 1, 2. † Jude 24. ‡ Mat. xxiii. 3. § John xx. 17.

whom he had baptized, and says, "I thank God that I baptized no other."\* Now, although he gives this reason, lest any should say he had baptized in his own name; yet, had he believed, either that it was needful to salvation, or that it promoted the glory of God, is it credible that Paul would have been thankful he had in that, or any other case, served Him so little? that he had baptized no more? unless he had *at least a jealousy*, that in baptizing those few, he had acted in his own creaturely will rather than in the will of God; seeing that the most extreme desire of every one, *so far as he is a christian*, is a desire for the glory of God, and the kingdom of our dear Redeemer; and the greatest of all incitements for the humble gratitude, love, and allegiance towards God and his blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is, first, a conviction that he has condescended to shew us His will concerning our duties; and, secondly, and more especially, that He has disposed our hearts and enabled us to perform His will (without the mixture of our own wills), to His glory, (without the mixture of our own glory);† so Paul's rejoicing that he had baptized,

\* 1 Cor. i. 14, 16.

† This sentiment in no degree disaccords with the illimitable gratitude, adoration, and love, with which we contemplate the sufferings of Christ for our sake; but is one feeling in the bundle of life (let him that readeth understand); it harmonizes with a divine harmony, and is the practical application of the doctrine; indeed, what good shall the adorable sacrifice do for us if we be not, through that medium, enabled to overcome our sins? Indeed, what comfort shall we have in our love and gratitude to God, unless accompanied by that allegiance, whose proof and whose fruit is manifested by His having enabled us (in some considerable degree at least) to discontinue offending Him? or what good should our spiritual life do for us if it were possible for us to have it while we work the works of darkness, and do despite to the witness for God

no more bears this construction, that he believed he had not done right in those few instances, surely we can hardly suppose that Paul was only so very superficially experienced in divine things, as not, up to that time, to have attained to this sublime and true experience, that whatever is done in the will of God, glorifies God; and that whatever religious service is attempted in the will of the creature, does not glorify God; but rather that it offends Him, and gathers people away from Him; yea, that it tends to death rather than Life.

Now John writes, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,"\* and goes on through the book of Revelations to declare so much of what he saw and heard on that occasion, as, in wisdom, it was the good pleasure of the Spirit he should write. Now, being in the Spirit, is the only state in which a man can discern and obey the will of the Spirit; is the only state in which man can glorify God or profit the soul of his fellow-man in the life of religion; this applies to Paul as well as to all other christians. We have abundant evidence that Paul was frequently in the Spirit; now, at the period of baptizing a brother or a sister, he either was in the Spirit, or he was not; if he was, in either of those cases, in the Spirit (or Light), and acted in the Spirit (or Light), what he did, glorified God, and was good to the brother or sister: would Paul bless God that any instances of his having been enabled to glorify God, or promote his kingdom in the heart of a brother or a sister, had been of rare occurrence to him? But, if on a retrospect of those

in our hearts? Indeed, what comfort could Heaven itself afford us if our souls be not previously redeemed from any and all rivals of God, whether covetousness or any other idolatry?

\* Rev. i. 10.

engagements, he could not discern the finger of God, but believed that in his own zeal (and if his own, it was blind zeal, great an apostle though he was), he had acted in his own will and his own way; well might he thank God that he had done no more in an ordinance which he had been enabled to see no longer glorified the Creator, nor benefitted his creatures. Surely Paul must have often experienced that every act of simple obedience to the will of God brings the soul a nearer approach to the presence of Divine Purity! And it is quite clear, from his own confession, that the creaturely activity of attempting to serve God in his own will, rather than patiently seeking the will of God, made work for his repentance; for he says, "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God:"\* this he did in his own will, his blind zeal, which practice generally merges in professing the will of God and doing our own, and is, perhaps, the most successful of the schemes of the great adversary to man's salvation.

Thus, the Jews were loud in their professions of love to God, and to the memory of deceased prophets, and had been zealous for the baptism of John, for they "were willing for a season to rejoice in his light;"† yet they crucified the Lord of life and glory; they pleased and satisfied themselves with the theory of religion, and fancied they had got the substance; they spent their strength in *talking* and *hearing*, and fancied themselves in that state which is reserved for the *doers* of God's will; yet how plain, and how dreadful, are the denunciations, more particularly by the Lord Jesus himself, against such; "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction,

\* 1 Cor. xv. 9. † John v. 35.

and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.\*\*

Now, whether we understand that Rock to be typical of Christ, or whether we understand it to be typical of that Revelation of the mind and will of God which Christ declared He would build His Church upon, it is either way in perfect harmony and keeping; for it was Revelation on which Christ declared to Peter that He would build His Church. It was for having received Revelation, that Christ declared Peter to be blessed. It was

\* Mat. vii. 13, 25.

Revelation that Christ described as a Rock, and declared that the gates of Hell should not prevail against it. And this Revelation does God still continue to give liberally to those who ask Him, while they whose wisdom is of themselves, and not of God, are, with the proud, and the disputer, sent empty away. That Revelation of the will of God and Christ which the Pharisees and Lawyers, the Traders in Religion, blasphemed in the days of Christ's bodily visitation, and which, in the same spirit, to the same effects and fruits, some of the Traders in Religion in this nineteenth century deny the existence of in this day, though ready enough to allow it in former times. Alas! that any in this age of high profession should deny, as those wicked Jews denied, the Revelation of the will of God to man; alas! that so many who profess to be christians, should in this day slight the operation thereof in their hearts, and openly blaspheme against Him both in sermons and books as they do by their declarations, that Revelation has ceased to the sons of men! But this fatal error is readily accounted for; it is easier to the carnal mind to TALK of the holiness of men in former ages, than to OBEY the witness for God, in their own hearts, the obedience to whom by the power of God, caused those whom they so applaud to have been what they were: but what shall be said, or how can we hope, for those who having been led by the spirit, and, having walked in the spirit, now deny it? "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."\* How terrible is the coincidence of that

\* Hebrews vi. 4, 6.

text with this ! “ Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come ! ” \* Indeed, if we calmly consider, we may be constrained to say on this occasion, “ O generation of vipers how can ye, being evil, speak good things ? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. ” † For the viper, when warmed and comforted, biteth the hand that hath saved it from death ; and those who, having been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, afterwards deny the Revelation thereof in the heart, and the wonders He has wrought even in their own experience ; if this passage does not include such, whom can it apply to ? Well might tears of blood be shed for these, could any thing avail to turn that horrible calamity which they appear but too plainly to be preparing themselves for.

The substitution of theory for practice, of profession for obedience, is no new thing ; it appears to have been begun by Eve, continued by Adam, and most horribly consummated so early as the time of Cain, who thought to please God by the erection of an altar, and offered his fruits thereon, and evidently had considerable zeal in his religion, which was proved by his being so wroth with his brother, who, with the same regularity, so far as we read, performed also his outward observances, and brought of the firstlings of his flock. Now the relative acceptance of the brothers could hardly relate to the character of their outward offerings ; but we may find the

\* Matt. vi. 31, 32. † Matt. xii. 34.

cause of the rejection of one votary and the acceptance of the other, in the simple rule that the dear Redeemer also always teaches as the very point and fulcrum of acceptance ; “ If thou doest well, shalt not thou be accepted ? and if thou doest not well, sin lyeth at the door.”\* Yet, continuing to love himself better than God, which was clearly proved by his loving his own will better than the will of his Creator, there appears but small interval between his outward performances of religious forms and the first murder ; in which also was involved religious persecution ; for his brother’s religious attainments appear to have been the chief incitements of his envy and malice. And in every subsequent period of man’s history, there has been a strong tendency to rest in theory, though many of those theories were of course excellent, for they had God for their author ; yet did their excellency consist in leading man to God ; and if they were followed without that result, they became a snare, yea, a rival to God in the heart of man ; and in this way have various forms, by some, if not very many, been made a snare by lulling the soul into a false repose, by inducing man to place an undue value on ordinances and records, and thereby satisfying his soul with something short of that true rest to which Christ’s Baptism, by oft-repeated exercises, leads the soul by the path of obedience, fidelity, and love.

Now, wherein is the substantial, broad, general difference between the nature of the Jew’s practice of resting in forms, while they imagined themselves to be on the road to Heaven, and the practice of professing christians who do the same thing ? Christians approve of this language when applied to the Jews, “ Ye hypocrites, well did Esias prophecy of you, saying, this people draweth

\* Genesis iv. 7.

nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me ; but in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,"\* Albeit, their doctrines were chiefly the doctrines of God, so far as words are concerned ; but not living in those doctrines, the very Truth became, as regarded their profession thereof, a lie ; inasmuch as they declared what they neither felt nor knew, for the things of God are only spiritually discerned.† They taught for gain from their quarter,‡ and made war against those who would not put into their mouth, as mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, always has practised and always will, until consigned to that pit from whose bourne no traveller returns.

Doubtless, in every age, there have been men and women who, in connexion with forms, have, in the spirit, sought and found the Lord of Life and Glory, and been by Him led through life and supported in death. And, doubtless, in every age there have been those who, without forms have, in the same spirit, sought and found the same Holy High Priest, and have by Him been led through life and supported in death : yet, as a general epitome of the average of men may we not take this lamentable retrospect ? That in all ages of the world a large proportion of mankind have loved themselves a very great deal, and been very faithful to their sins, and have, consequently, had but very little room for the love of God in their hearts, and have been very faithless to Him ; moreover, a large proportion of the service they did render, had its very life or existence in a selfish desire to escape from punishment, far, very far away from pure love and gratitude to God for all His manifold mercies and goodness ; many of this

\* Matt. xv. 7. 9.    † 1 Cor. ii. 14.    ‡ Isaiah cvi. 11.

class have, in all ages, been high professors ; and some having become hirelings, traders in religion, and others, zealous supporters of hirelings, they have taught the people that religion consists very much in the correctness of their opinions upon certain great Truths, and a *corporeal uniting with certain carnal ordinances* ; and this has been a very palatable bait both with preachers and hearers, because the preachers could sell these commodities, and deliver them to their customers, though they could not supply them with the Holy Ghost for their money ;\* and the hearers were pleased with it, because they would rather part with some of their money than all their sins ; and they found the stirring of the Holy witness in their hearts rendering them so uneasy with their sins, that they gladly availed themselves of the false consolations of priestcraft, to get away from, or stifle, that which would have brought them to Christ. Thus both preachers and hearers have united, because they might assent to very many doctrines of Christ, and, adding a few of their own, such as (sin for term of life,) lay fast hold of their claim to this world, while they professed to be heirs of that which is to come ; yea, and not only have deceived themselves in this state of existence, but will keep it up to the judgment seat of Christ, at the last day, forgetting the unrepented sins they had committed in those bodies of which they shall have then become divested, and remembering the many instances in which they have talked, and wrought, and done what they have thought to be many wonderful works. But alas ! too late for repentance will the webb of sophistry be torn from their then naked souls by the solemn declaration, "I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity."†

\* Acts xvii. 22. † Matt. vii. 23.

The religion of this class of persons has generally consisted very much in doubtful disputations, in which is mixed up much error, with much of that which, when uttered in the will of God, is Truth; but if Divine Truths be uttered without being felt or understood, they are empty declamations; or, perhaps, to those who utter them, even worse; as it is written, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."\* Yet we know that many men utter with their lips that declaration, who, notwithstanding, also declare that divine revelation has long ceased to be vouchsafed to man; thus denying the only authority by which they can acknowledge Him, and denying the following promises of Jesus to His disciples; "And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."† And again; "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;"‡ and again, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me;"§ and again, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me; if any man will *do* His will, he shall *know* of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;"|| and again, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."¶

But then, if a man's heart chiefly desires this world's good, it is with him as with all others; "His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or

\* 1 Cor. xii. 3.    † Mat. xxviii. 20.    ‡ Mat. xviii. 20.  
§ Rev. iii. 20.    || John vii. 16, 17.    ¶ John xiv. 23, 24

of obedience unto righteousness."\* So then, the professor whose religion dwells in the head, and has its existence there, seeks first the things of this world, and gives the ends and scraps of his time and affections to God, forgetting (or acting in a stupid disobedience to) the warning, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."† Thus, as "No man can serve two masters;" as "he cannot serve God and mammon;"‡ so, whatever his profession, he either walks in Christ's narrow way, or the broad way: in the latter, he indulges himself, and especially avoids the cross, because he loves himself better than God; but, if, by divine assistance, he enters in at the strait gate,§ and walks in the narrow way, he gives up his whole heart to God; and, notwithstanding the many weaknesses which poor humanity is heir to, he still endeavours to pursue the path of duty; and though he may often start from the cross, he is kindly brought back by his all-powerful Master; he dares not altogether shrink from it, as he desires to be altogether obedient to it; he follows Christ not merely in words, but in deeds and in truth. He does not talk a great deal of God or of Christ, for the Holy Name is with him too solemn to be lightly used; but he glorifies the Deity in his heart; and the prayer, that if it were possible he might never again offend; the prayer, that he might know all the will of God concerning his own path, and more especially that he might be endued with the desire and ability to perform whatever his gracious God might will for him; the desire, that he may be pre-

\* Rom. vi. 16. † Gal. vi. 7, 8. ‡ Mat. vi. 24. § Mat. vii. 13.

served from intermeddling between any other creature and his God, except so far as it is the will of God manifested in the secret of his heart he should do; the child-like supplication as to a Heavenly Father, that He would be pleased to forgive him his sins; the gratitude and love for the many mercies of his faithful Creator and his blessed Redeemer; the prayer for all the human family; the love to all God's creatures; the unity with whatever is believed to tend to His glory, whether in friends or opponents; the grief for whatever tends to offend Him, are the things uppermost in his heart; while the empty professor, and the noisy dealer in religion questions the christianity of his principles, because he dares not talk much of God and Christ. But he, feeling the solemnity thereof, comes experimentally to understand and observe, and keep the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."\* He loves God and His will, and desires that his own will should in all things be brought into subjection to the will of God. To him the path of duty is the most pleasant of all paths, the most desired, the most valued, the most enjoyed; it is his meat and drink, literally the meat and drink of his soul to do the will of God, and finish that work which the Lord appoints to him individually; and the chief theme of his gratitude is, that he feels that his faithful Creator is enabling him to cease from offending Him, and, in some degree, enabling him to understand and do His holy will, like a simple, obedient child. In this state he feels and knows that he can do no good thing of himself; but yet, that he is enabled, by the power of God, to live to Him and not to himself; thus he renders *all* the glory to God, as well he may, knowing

\* Exodus xx. 7.

from heartfelt experience, that it all belongs to God, and loving Him too well to be willing to rob Him.

So this seems to be the sum of religion, to love God and keep His commandments; yet no man can obey the commands of God except by supernatural strength bestowed; therefore, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."\* Those who obey and co-operate with it have larger measure given them; more spiritual discernment to discover the will of God; more ability to steady, uniform obedience to that will; while those who neglect to use the gift bestowed;† or who, instead of obeying, attempt to rule, have that taken away which they seemed to have. Thus, (for such is the will of God), spiritual obedience earns spiritual strength, and that again enables to more perfect obedience; and thus, there is a going on from strength to strength, and thus is given grace for grace; and thus is realized, by co-operating with the talents received (but only in the will of God), that five talents are made ten; and such is the benevolence of our faithful Creator, that instead of charging us any thing for these talents, the more we have, the more He gives us. He actually rewards us for receiving, using, and taking care of His favours; yea, and He also rewards us for asking more, only we must be very careful not "to ask amiss;‡ and the only way to avoid this, is to seek for ability from Him to ask aright,§ and to be very careful not to neglect the gifts bestowed. In so doing we may abide in Christ, and shall be preserved from asking out of the will of God, who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power

\* 1 Cor. xii. 7.      † Mat. xxv. 20, 30.      ‡ James iv. 3.  
§ John xv. 7.

that worketh in us."\* In this state we shall experience, both, that we have no inclination to build on any other foundation than Christ Jesus;† and that the only means of coming to this foundation is to take it in Christ's own way, the rock of Revelation;‡ and the only way to obtain the revelation of the will of the Divine Author of true religion, is to seek unto Him, in our hearts, and to obey the manifestation of His blessed will therein discovered. As He said, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth his hands toward His disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."§

In this progress or growth of regeneration, we come to know what spirituality means; "we become as little children;" we aspire, "the Lord's will be done;" and we pray that our own wills might, if it were possible, never again thwart the free course of the only good and pure will. Here is divine harmony. Here is divine growth. Here is feeding "on the body and blood of Jesus."|| Here is becoming "His brother, or sister, or mother."¶ Here is the comfort of that answer, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."\*\* Here is the life of God in the soul of man. Here is the seed of the Everlasting Kingdom, "sown in weakness, raised in power,"†† commencing in time, continuing, if we sell it not, to all eternity! But nothing in our own wills; it is all of God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His

\* Ephesians iii. 20. † Mat. xvi. 17, 18. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 4. § Mat. xii. 48, 50. || John vi. 48, 58. ¶ Mat. xii. 50. \*\* Mat. xxv. 40. †† Cor. xv. 43.

own good pleasure ; and as it hath pleased Him to give us ability or grace to chuse, and ability to plunge ourselves into perdition by rejecting Him, how careful ought we to be to watch and pray that we fall not into the sin of those Jews, who in their own wills attempted to serve God, or pretended so to do ; who were loud in their professions of love to God and to the memory of deceased prophets, yet persecuted the good men of their own time. These Jews, instead of plain, simple, practical obedience and love to God, often contented their consciences by their praises of Moses and the prophets, while they persecuted the prophets of their own time, even to sawing them asunder. When the Blessed Redeemer was personally on earth, (oh ! how full of love must He have been to leave, *in degree*, the presence of the Everlasting Father for wretches such as we), this temptation was continued with quite as much deplorable success as in preceding ages.

The preference of theory to practice ; the preference of profession to obedience ; the preference of superficial acknowledgment by the lips, to the incorporation of the soul with Christ, was as strikingly exemplified as by the former generations of the Jews, or as by the time-serving professors of the present day, who extol the prophets and apostles for their obedience to the revelation of the will of God in their hearts, yet “ crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,”\* by denying the revelation thereof in the heart of man in these latter days. They extol the apostles, and particularly Paul, as though all his writings were immaculate ; and this is favourable to the cruel designs of our adversary the devil ; because a man may profess religion, and may extol prophets and

\* Hebrews vi. 6.

apostles, and read his Bible, and yet his heart may be as distant from the will of God as the poles are opposite each other, but he cannot thus follow after the devil and obtain *spiritual life and growth* ; for though, in theory, he may serve God and mammon, yet, in practice, in reality, he "cannot serve God and mammon."\*

For those whose religion is theoretical rather than practical ; who satisfy their consciences with faith in the head, in contradistinction to faith and works in all that we are, and all that we possess ; those who worship the scriptures as the only medium, means, or accompaniment, whereby we can become acceptable to God ; it might be of great advantage to such to remember, that Moses thought so much more of fidelity in the heart than he did of records, that, on coming down from the Mount with the commandments engraved on two stones by *God himself*, he brake† even *those records* to pieces, on finding the people had turned away from, and become unfaithful to, the *spiritual law*, written by the same gracious God on the fleshly tables of their *hearts*.

I would recommend those Friends who wish for evidences of the correctness of the principles of the early members of the society to remember, that the Redeemer gave this rule as the proof by which persons, and, in some degree, principles also, were to be judged ; "Ye shall know them by their fruits ; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?"‡ And, if we examine the histories of religious persecutions in the last few centuries, and the relative practice of the different religious societies while in power, and while the victims of power ; I suppose we shall find that the Friends were nearly, or quite, the only society, who, having had political power,

\* Mat. vi. 24. † Exodus xxxii. 19. ‡ Mat. vii. 16.

refrained from the forcible exercise thereof in the promotion of proselytism. Also, that though worldly power succeeded in terrifying from their public religious meetings, every other religious community on which it tried its virulence, yet that they never have succeeded in terrifying or dissuading the Friends from theirs; but, though every other persecuted sect met secretly with fastened doors, and not in their usual places of public meeting, Friends always met\* at their usual times and places in a public manner, though frequently informed beforehand, that an armed force would come to the meeting to disperse, ill use, and probably imprison them: that, although, in very many instances, a large proportion of Friends had been seized and sent to prison, yet the remainder met regularly, though that remainder, in some cases, consisted entirely of children, all the adults being in prison; and, although, in some instances, they no longer had benches to sit down upon, because they had been carried out and burned by the persecutors; and sometimes they had not the house to cover them, for their own meeting houses were often locked up from them, in which case their practice was to meet in the street or court, as near to the door as they could; and if, as in some instances, the meeting-house had been pulled down, they met on the heap of materials of which it had been composed.

But, friends, what have we of all this singleness of heart to the Lord? How few of us, in this our day,

\* There may have been instances to the contrary, for aught I know; but not recollecting any deviations in the records of Friends, I presume it was their general, if not universal practice, thus to walk in the path of duty; trusting to God, either for protection, or for ability to bear whatever suffering he might permit they should be afflicted with.

would do, and suffer, and fight, as these our honourable predecessors have done; and suffered, and fought with the sword of the Spirit, and under the banner of truth. Has not a fatal change taken possession even of some of our leading members, who, to this day, have great influence in our assemblies? I confess, that reflecting on the unfaithfulness of some whose ministry has been blessed to my soul, and whom I tenderly loved when they spoke in that authority which their influence has more recently tended to bear down and set at nought; and, pondering on these things, I have been reminded of, and could adopt, the lamentation of Jeremiah, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people: Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them:"\* for "they have healed also the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."†

Oh, that there were such an heart in us that we would fear the Lord, and keep all His commandments always, that it might be well with us, and with our children for ever:‡ that we might, even in this stage of our existence, come to the consolatory assurance, that our souls were really made up into the bundle of life, in which the "beggarly elements" have no place.

And can we deem this too high an attainment to aim at, when we "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."§ When we consider, that "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that

\* Jer. ix. 1, 2. † Jer. vi. 14. ‡ Deut. v. 29. § 1 John iii. 1.

we might live through Him.”\* When we reflect that this Love is of His power, not of ours, and is His own blessed work, praised and magnified be His name for ever. “Herein is Love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”† Indeed, the Bible is full of the love of God to man, though He hateth our iniquities. How can we reasonably doubt His kind intentions towards us, if we honestly endeavour to walk before Him in that perfection, which is not of us nor begotten in our will, but is known in that love of God which admits no rival; in that trust of Him which admits no doubts; in that obedience to His Light in the conscience which allows neither stipulations, nor delay, nor diminution; in that allegiance in which the heart looks up to, adores, and magnifies His Holy Name; and all the feelings within us that we cherish and value, respond thereto.

And you, dear Friends, who yet hold fast your confidence in the Light of Life; you, who have too much dread of entering into temptation, to dare to exchange the endeavour after constant watchfulness, for sake of all the theories of even divine Truth; you, who in simple, yet attentive allegiance, love and gratitude to Christ, dare not exchange the performance of your duties to Him, for the habit of talking about and pretending to understand how He performed His duties to His Father; you, who have hitherto found the only way of realizing, to the sanctification of your own souls, an actual, and peaceful, and humble, reliance on the benefits of His obedience, to be inseparably connected with the endeavour to follow His holy example in the strength that He affords; you, who honestly trust His word, that if

\* 1 John iv. 9.      † 1 John iv. 10.

you act according to His will, He will certainly be with you even to the end, and eventually present you to His Father ; you, who would feel any symptoms of doubt of these his precious promises, as blasphemy towards Him ; you, however few your number now remains, who have not yet bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed his image, or, in other words, whose souls do still love God better than the world and the things of the world ; and you, who dare not worship even good men, by relying upon even them, good as you may rejoicingly believe them to be ; but who still endeavour to bring *all* your deeds to the *Light of Christ* in your hearts, to be *judged there*, whether for consolation, or whether for suffering ; to you, who have thus bought the truth, oh, sell it not ; I conjure you, sell it not ! And although you may take up a lamentation and say, "How are the mighty fallen ;" yet, you may remember, that God is able even of the stones of the street to raise up children unto Abraham.\* Yea, and if in our high places there are those among us, who, by supporting each other in preference to, and in no slight degree, in the neglect of, carrying every subject to the Judgment Seat of Christ, actually glorify each other more than they glorify God : it may be, that the children will yet be enabled to cry, Hosannah ! and out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God may yet have perfected praise, even in our small church.†

And, however much religious controversialists may scoff at the doctrine of the light in the conscience, and you for professing it ; and thereby prepare their souls for the sentence which, in that same light, will be addressed to them in the last day, "I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."‡ Yet, dear

\* Matt. iii. 9.

† Matt. xxi. 16.

‡ Matt. vii. 23.

Friends, what can be done in these trying circumstances, or what can be said, more or less, than simply to follow the holy example, and aspire in the heart, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."\* The enemy would doubtless provoke to anger; but it is not well to be angry, though we may be grieved; what can be done, more than carry all to HIM who has graciously said, by one of HIS prophets, "Cast thy burthen upon the Lord; and He shall sustain thee."† Doubtless, each of us may individually remember having provoked the Lord; so let us, if we incline to anger, be angry each with himself, and each with his own sin; and let us all deeply seek to know of the Lord, if He have any service for us, with reference to these dark and mysterious defections among us; this unfaithfulness "to the Father of Lights." And cease not to bear in mind, that if the society should ever again experience and witness the glory which has departed from our Israel, it will only be, by getting back to that Rock, which, by too much talking about in our own strength, we had nearly lost sight of, while tossed on the waves of soul-deceiving, self-seeking, empty profession, dry, and dead, and nought, and, alas! even worse than nought.

May we all sink deep into our own souls; may we dig deep, and be enabled to cast out all the rubbish from our hearts, all our own wills and ways, and especially the idols, and come down to the Rock that abideth for ever; "even Christ in us, the hope of Glory,‡" the only way to Glory: that we may build on a sure foundation with those materials only which He supplies us with; and, in that manner only which He teaches, for change is stamped on all besides.

\* Luke xxiii. 34.    † Psalms lv. 22.    ‡ Coloss. i. 27.

Then let us be careful in all things to endeavour to be guided by the good Shepherd; neither running before, nor idling behind, nor straying either from the fold or from the path; for, let us remember, that God's works, not our's, can praise HIM;"\* and His wisdom only can direct aright, and His power only can preserve; therefore, let us endeavour to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."† Careful to do our own day's work in the day time; for "the night cometh" on each of us, "wherein no man can work;"‡ and where the tree falleth, there it shall be."§

Numerous have been the instances in which forms and shadows have been introduced by Divine Wisdom, because of the deficiency of spirituality in mankind: and Jesus, speaking of one of these divine laws, says, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you" to do so and so.¶ while I have been writing this little book, I have deplored the continuance of hardness of heart, which, even to this day, covers the minds of religious professors in every church, and lamentably tends to curb and divert our heaven-ward progress. I have, in much awe and humility of soul, far beyond my power of language to express, felt the pure, unmixed, entire-spirituality, and infinite nature of the christian dispensation, shewn forth in every record of the precept and example of Jesus Christ; and we may observe by the records of the holy apostles, that not even they knew any spiritual thing, until it was spiritually communicated to them; and I believe that the hardness of heart still existing is, in no slight degree, caused by the outward nature of the religion and worship prevailing among

\* Psalms cxlv. 10. † Matt. x. 16. ‡ John ix. 4. § Eccles. xi. 3.  
¶ Mat. xix. 8.

christians. We read, that when Christ was about to be offered up for our sins, that through His grace we might be redeemed from sin, He addressed His disciples in these words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come: He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you: All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you."\* And again, "The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father."†

We here see, that at the period when the Son of God was about to be offered up, the disciples even yet remained so carnal and worldly minded, that the most spiritual or vital portion of His doctrines, He told them plainly they could not yet bear; and goes on to instruct them what would enable them to bear it, to understand it, and to be led and guided by it; in which they would come to experience that blessed state wherein He would no more speak to them in proverbs, but tell them plainly of the Father; and this same Spirit of Truth is in us; but, alas! how do we neglect it! And the utter inadequacy of any thing short of Revelation to enable man to comprehend the things of God, was soon put to the test; for Mark thus records the events which immediately ensued upon the resurrection. "Now, when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

\* John xvi. 12, 15. † John xvi. 25.

And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that He appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked and went into the country; and and they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them. Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.”\*

This hardness of heart and unbelief of the apostles, how strikingly does it confirm these fundamental doctrines with which the Bible abounds. “By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”† “Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.”‡ “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.”§ And we see that even those who, like Peter, have received this revelation of God, have no property in it, but only have it so long as God pleaseth to continue to reveal it to them; for Peter, to whom the living God had revealed that Jesus was the Christ, His Son.|| And Peter, James, and John who had witnessed “Moses and Elias talking with Jesus;” and who had heard the voice of God, saying unto them, “This is my Beloved Son: hear Him:”¶ And all the Apostles who had witnessed Him restoring several dead bodies to life; who had witnessed that those who touched but His garments were made perfectly whole; who had witnessed His feeding thousands abundantly with a quantity of food, which, without a miracle, would have sufficed

\* Mark xvi. 9, 14. † Ephes. ii. 8. ‡ James i. 17. § 1 Cor. xii. 3. || Matt. xvi. 17. ¶ Mark ix. 4, 7.

only a few individuals ; who had declared, (and doubtless with sincerity), that they would die for Him rather than forsake Him ; who had witnessed Him walking across the sea, on the surface of the water ; who had witnessed Peter, at His permission, approach Him on the same unstable element ; who had witnessed, that while faith remained in Peter, he was perfectly safe ; but that when he began to fear, when he no longer had implicit, unalloyed faith, he began to sink, although in the bodily presence of the Holy Saviour ; who had witnessed that even the winds and sea obeyed His voice, and that the tempest was instantly hushed at His rebuke ; He bestowed a great calm upon them, instead of the billows which had begun to overwhelm them ; and He had, moreover, informed them of His resurrection ; and they had all the reason to depend upon His truth, His Wisdom, and His Fidelity, that it was possible rational creatures could possess : yet, would they not believe, though Mary Magdalene told them, and though two of their brethren told the remainder.\*

This incredulity is utterly at variance with all known principles of human reasoning ; but to those who have been baptized into the knowledge of the doctrine, that every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights ;† even this incredulity, how astonishing soever to the unregenerate mind, causes little or no marvel to those who have been taught of God : they know that neither the apostles nor any other men can discern the things of God, except as they are *spiritually* revealed.‡ For although scientific and other *reasoning* knowledge are attained by mental research, and he who has the quickest

\* Mark xvi. 11, 13.    † James i. 17.    ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

and clearest perception of the relative nature of things, and who has the greatest capability of continued application, and the greatest originality of invention, is capable of making the greatest progress in all worldly knowledge : yet He, and He alone, knows the things of God, who obeys His will, manifested in the secret of his heart,\* and all who obey Him are His children, and all His children are taught of their Heavenly Father, and great shall be the peace of His children.† So it was with the apostles, and so it has been and will be with all other christians, that the things of God are spiritually discerned;‡ and unless we know them by Revelation, we know them not at all, though we may think we know them. Even His disciples, up to the period of His resurrection, did not understand the Scriptures; but, just as He was about to return to the Everlasting Father, "He opened their understandings, that they might understand them."§ And even after He had bestowed this precious understanding upon them, they were bidden to "Tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high."|| And the gospel of John winds up the account with this remarkable testimony, "There are also many other things which Jesus did; the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."¶ And well might he suppose so on recollecting that the worldly part, the worldly wisdom, in the disciples themselves, never could contain the purposes or the end of the coming of the Messiah : thus exhibiting a practical illustration of the reply of Abraham to the covetous and selfish Dives :

\* Luke viii. 21. † Isaiah liv. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14. § Luke xxiv. 45.

|| Luke xxiv. 49. ¶ John xxi. 25.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”\*

As christians of the present day vary in their views of the nature of the Baptism commanded by the Saviour of Man, in His exhortation immediately before He ascended to Heaven, it seems desirable to read and consider, first what He said on that occasion : secondly, how His disciples understood the command : and, thirdly, the confirmation of either opinion by the miracles that accompanied and followed the obedience of the disciples, to what they believed the command to relate to.

Matthew’s account thereof is as follows. . . “All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth ; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world : Amen.”† Here we may see that all power is given, not to John, but Christ : that they were to baptize, not in the name of John, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them whatsoever Christ had commanded, not what John had commanded ; (though, doubtless, the divine message to repent, whether delivered by John, or by other prophets, will remain, while one sin remains to be repented of) ; and they were assured, not that John, or his Baptism, would be with them to the end of the world, but, that Jesus Himself would be so : and He is, to the present day, with His disciples at every Baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is His Baptism : let him that can receive it, receive it.

Mark’s account is, “Go ye into all the world, and

\* Luke xvi. 31. † Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.

preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."\* Is John's Gospel or Christ's Gospel here directed to be preached ? Doubtless Christ's Gospel. Is John's Baptism, or Christ's Baptism, here described in connection with belief as inheriting salvation ? If John's Baptism, how is it that the population, which more than any other in any age or country united with John's Baptism, yet perpetrated the murder of the body of Jesus Christ ? How is it that they who, almost without exception, received John's Baptism, and counted him as a prophet, yet were so much more obdurate than even the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Tyre and Sidon, that the Lip of Truth declared " Woe unto thee, Chorazin ; Woe unto thee Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you ! And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell ; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."† So it will be more tolerable for the inhabitants of a city which contained not so many as ten righteous persons, than for the inhabitants of those cities which, more than any other people, had adopted Water Baptism. And why ? Because they rested in the form, and did despite unto the Revelation of the will of God, manifested to them by the Son of God, and by His Holy Spirit.

\* Mark xvi. 15, 16. † Matt. xi. 21. 24.

This same spiritual tendency is likewise instructively observable in Luke's and John's accounts of the last verbal communication of the Blessed Redeemer, although the word Baptism is not mentioned. In Acts, the account plainly puts Water Baptism aside, as a thing departed and done with ; and, in contradistinction to that, Christ directs the attention to His own Baptism, in these words : " Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me ; for John truly baptized with Water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."\* And again, " But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."† Now who, on reading the first few chapters of the Acts, can doubt as to which Baptism the disciples understood their Divine Master to refer to. There are, in these few chapters, several instances in which the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, His offices, His effects, and His accompaniments, are recorded ; but not one mention or hint of John, or his Baptism, or of Water, except once, and then, only to describe it as a bye gone thing, in contradistinction to what they were to look for and value. And the miracles that accompanied and followed the Baptism of the Holy Ghost are also conclusive evidence that, in thus understanding their Lord's will, they understood it aright ; not that in their own wills they could effect any good thing, nor in their own power. Yet some will say this command of Christ, to go, baptize, applies to His disciples in every age. I don't know that I ever doubted of it. Then, say they,

\* Acts. i. 4, 5.      † Acts i. 8. 9.

this must mean Water Baptism, for who can baptize with the Holy Ghost? Now I would rejoin, and who can baptize with water either? The virtue is not in the *slightest degree* either in the Water, or in the hand that dispenses it; but *all* the virtue, *all* the efficacy, *all* the reality, is in the power of God, even of Water Baptism, as well as of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Where men attempt to baptize, unless they are moved thereto by the spirit, it is no more Baptism than the splashing from a sportive goose in a pond would be Baptism. Yet, in defiance of the evidence of Christs commands; in defiance of the apostles' comprehension of those commands; in defiance of the proof which miracles afford, that by this baptism is meant no less, and no other, than the Baptism by the Holy Ghost and by fire; yet some will have it that it means Water Baptism; because, say they, men cannot baptize with the Holy Ghost, but they can baptize with water. Oh, most fallacious notion. What! is it possible a christian can suppose there is any life, any reality in either Baptism, except of the power of God? Is it possible any christian can deliberately believe that the very smallest part of the efficacy of any Baptism is in poor silly man? No! No! The sole virtue, the only circumstance which really constitutes it Baptism, is the presence and power of God. Oh! the need of more simple spirituality in the church of Christ up to this very moment. How different was the experience of the apostles immediately after the ascension. When they were endued with power from on high they were so filled with the Holy Ghost, they dwelt so sweetly in the power of God, that these beggarly elements do not appear to have been even thought of.

And why should man, after having learned some of the rudiments of christianity; after being in some degree

engrafted into the one only true vine, run away therefrom? Why should they go back from Christ to his forerunner John? Thus reversing the order of Divine appointment. "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain,"\* "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of Faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?"† But how strikingly similar have been the foibles and follies of poor man in every age. For John bears this record, "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not! He came unto His own, and His own received Him not! But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."‡

How strikingly does every sentiment thus applied to the Galatian professor, and his creaturely services, apply to the English professor and his creaturely services. How strikingly alike is the English professor who is zealous of forms, yet perceives not the presence of the true light in his heart; or, if in part he perceives it cannot trust it implicitly to guide him into all truth; and the Jew who, when the Redeemer came to him perceived Him not as the inward Saviour, but rather remained

\* Galat ii. 21. † Galat iii. 1. 4. ‡ John i. 9. 13.

zealous of the tradition of the elders. The light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world is still striving with man, and would, if obedience kept pace with knowledge, lead him into all truth;\* but he, not knowing what is stirring within him, runs into creaturely activity to ease his troubled soul, and runs after those who tell him, "Lo! here is Christ, or there;"† forgetting all the while that "the kingdom of God is within him,"‡ and away he goes to some hired preacher to explain to him the things of God, although that very Being has declared by one of His servants, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."§

I trust that I do not wish to exalt a sect; but, though utterly unworthy, I felt constrained thus to advocate for the perfect allegiance of all to a faithful God, that we might not worship idols in the shape of Water Baptism, or other outward forms.

When we experience a state similar to that of the apostles, who prayed of their Divine Master, "Lord, increase our faith;"|| and when we feel great desertion and anxiety, not knowing whether we are in the path of duty, we should do well to remember, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;"¶ so let us not run to the "Lo here, or Lo there,"\*\* but remember, that the kingdom of God is within us. And let us all, wherever we go, bear about with us the remembrance of this anthem, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."††

#### FINIS.

\* John xvi. 13. † Mat. xxiv. 23. ‡ Luke xvii. 21. § James i. 5. || Luke xvii. 5. ¶ Proverbs xviii. 10. \*\* Luke xvii. 21. †† Isaiah xxvi. 3.







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